

Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Community Review SPRING 2008
Volume 5, Number 2
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



Message from the Director

One of my favorite responsibilities is to think about the future for ODHH, what ODHH should be focusing on to remove barriers that we face. Thinking about the future for ODHH happens constantly, not for just any specific day of the week or a month. Thinking about the future for ODHH happens when I talk with people and learn about the issues and potential solutions.



Eric Raff, ODHH Director

From these conversations and getting comments and feedback through ODHH advisory committee meetings and town hall meetings, I can better understand the issues that are happening locally and statewide.

I take ODHH legal requirements and limited resources and put together specific goals to address some of the issues and barriers. People have many expectations that ODHH address particular issues or barriers such as education and employment. For expectations to be realistic and feasible the issues and solutions must be related to ODHH legal requirements which are listed below:

- 1) Accessible telecommunications via relay services and specialized equipment
- 2) Accessible DSHS services via provision of reasonable accommodations
- 3) Accessible services via regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing

I put all of this together into specific goals and document them in a written strategic plan that is updated every two years. An ODHH 2009-2013 Strategic Plan is being drafted and will be posted on the ODHH website this spring. Please take a moment to review it and I will welcome your comments on what you think ODHH should be doing for you. The ODHH strategic plan will be finalized by the end of this summer.

Mark your calendar ODHH Advisory Committee

Saturday, June 14, 2008
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Best Western Lakeway Inn
714 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA 98229-6220



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DSHS Deputy Secretary

Blake Chard

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Telephone line options: Digital vs. Analog

Analog & DSL Lines

The *CapTel* phone is designed to work with an analog telephone line. *CapTel* may also be used with a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) with an appropriate analog filter. Digital office telephone lines are not compatible with *CapTel* and may damage the telephone. Please use the phone cord provided with *CapTel* or a similar phone cord. If you are installing *CapTel* in an office, check with the telephone system administrator to ensure an analog port is available.

PBX Systems

CapTel can be used in offices, hotels, or nursing homes on a PBX network provided an analog line or analog port is used. This is the same line that an office fax or a direct connect TTY would require.

Digital Cable/VOIP

CapTel can ONLY be used on a digital cable or VOIP line if set up in 2-Line mode. In 2-Line mode, Line 1 (which carries the voice part of the conversation) can be a digital cable or VOIP line such as Time Warner, Comcast, or Vonage. However, Line 2 (which carries the captions) MUST be an analog line or DSL with an analog filter.

Note: A PBX office environment still requires an analog line or analog port for both Lines 1 and 2.

Why an Analog Line?

While the *CapTel* looks and acts like a traditional telephone, it is really a very different kind of device. It is similar to a small computer. To show the text captions along with a caller's voice, the *CapTel* sets up a data connection (just like a fax machine or a computer modem connection) with the Captioning Service. Because data connections require a more stable connection with minimum interference, the *CapTel* is only recommended for use on analog phone lines.

As the various telephone line options continue to expand, please visit the *CapTel* website for the most current information about line requirements.

To find out what type of telephone line you have, contact your telephone company.



Today there are more choices of phone lines than ever before, with options like Digital Cable phone service, DSL, Voice Over IP (VOIP), and Fiber Optics (FIOS). As you make decisions about your phone service, it is important to understand CapTel telephone line requirements.

Source: Article from *CapTel® News* Spring 2008. Reprinted with permission from Ultratec.

Promises kept and voices heard

ODHH leads the nation with life-changing technology

*By Deborah Schow, Communications Consultant
source: Inside DSHS, February 7, 2008*

The DSHS Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is at the forefront of a communication technology upgrade that could make a profound impact on the lives of all DeafBlind people.

At about half the size of a laptop computer, the “DeafBlind Communicator” (DBC) is considered by its prototype users to be the first truly portable and user-friendly Braille technology system for communication with the larger public.

The new device offers the DeafBlind immediate access to engage people in the mainstream public in direct two-way conversation, whether in person, over the telephone or via the Internet.

The approximately 200 ODHH clients in Washington who are DeafBlind will be the first to use the DBC when it is released this spring, but other states and agencies are expected to follow the ODHH lead.



Within the first moments of getting to know the workings of the DeafBlind Communicator, the new assistive device opens new doors to communication. During prototype tests in Seattle last month, this first truly portable system for communication was a huge hit with people who are DeafBlind of all ages and walks of life.

“Life-changing” innovation

The result of a partnership between the ODHH and New Zealand assistive technology manufacturer, HumanWare, the DBC is a much-needed evolution from the original Tele-Braille systems, launched in the '80s.

Focus group users who are DeafBlind confirmed that this new assistive technology will allow them greater independence when accessing services and in daily interactions with their hearing and sighted peers. Several said through a sign language interpreter that having the DBC would be “life-changing.”

Tele-Braille

“Tele-Braille” was the first product that could incorporate Braille text from Text Telephone (TTY) phone calls, or Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) phone calls. It was a major breakthrough in telephone access for the DeafBlind and offered new possibilities for interaction and inclusion.

Tele-Braille systems were cutting edge technology when first put on the market more than 25 years ago. But with few major upgrades since its initial impact, it became outdated in this century. The devices had a short life span as technology was quickly changing and, at a price of \$6,500 for most models, they were beyond the reach of most DeafBlind without financial assistance.

As manufacturers deemed the market too small to be profitable for the additional research and development, they stopped making the older Tele-Braille systems. Cost for maintenance and parts skyrocketed.

Quality of life issue

Like an old computer or car, the cost of upkeep became impractical or impossible as parts wore out and machines were quickly failing beyond repair. Still, the Tele-Braille system remained a vital door to communication for its DeafBlind clients, and the ODHH continued to patch up the much-needed machines while an alternative was sought.

The Research Laboratory of the Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults developed the first Tele-Braille devices. The research laboratory has since been disbanded, leaving a void in assistive technology research for the DeafBlind. When no agency or organization was willing or able to conduct the research to develop a new product, DSHS and ODHH worked to find a manufacturer to partner with to produce a more compact and lightweight device that fit the specific needs of DSHS's DeafBlind clients. It is part of the ODHH's core mission to provide resources that enable its clients to have equal access and effective communication.

Born out of necessity and with direct input and consultations with DeafBlind individuals, the ODHH and HumanWare created the unique technology and software design used in the DeafBlind Communicator.

Demonstrations of delight

In focus groups with DeafBlind users at the Lighthouse for the Blind last month in Seattle the device was a hit. Users wanted to take the prototype home with them right then as demonstrations of delight filled the room as DeafBlind clients tried it out.

All who participated in last month's trials confirmed that the DBC can open new lines of communication and give them added confidence and independence, especially when traveling or doing errands without an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. During the Seattle trials, DeafBlind product testers broke into broad smiles, shared laughter, and exchanged hugs with their instructors and HumanWare and ODHH staff.

American Sign Language

For many people who are DeafBlind, ASL is their first language. Those who are completely without sight understand ASL by touching letters and words in the hands of another person who knows ASL. They need an interpreter who can sign ASL to have conversations with hearing people.

It is financially and otherwise impractical for most to have the much-in-demand services of a qualified interpreter around the clock. The designers at HumanWare noted that while the DBC cannot take the place of an interpreter, it does open doors to direct accessibility to banking, restaurants, and other amenities that hearing-sighted people enjoy. It can strengthen family bonds and friendships as communication opportunities widen with those not proficient in ASL.

How it works

In phone communications the device converts calls relayed through an operator into Braille characters.

In face-to-face meetings, a recorded spoken greeting explains that the user is DeafBlind. It gives the sighted person instructions to type on a standard keyboard. Their words will appear on a screen in Braille for the blind user to read. The DeafBlind reply using their choice of Braille or standard keyboard and the message is displayed in words on a screen for the hearing-sighted person to read.

When interviewed after test-run encounters where a DeafBlind person approached hearing-sighted people with the device seeking directions, some people said they were startled at first by the device, but all said they understood how to use it immediately.

Would you like fries with that?

With no buttons to press and widespread familiarity with keyboards in random tests, most people said they had no difficulty operating the device. All who participated said they "felt good" about the interaction. None had had any kind of contact with a DeafBlind person before and all reported that they would stop again if approached by a person with a DBC.

At one fast food restaurant the employee taking orders was confused when the device was put on the counter. He quickly called co-workers over and soon all wanted to take a turn at "talking" to the woman and wanted to take her order. This is a marked difference with other situations where the DeafBlind person only has a card with written words to present to a counter person and little possibility of interaction.

Essential to independence, employment

The cost of the equipment to DSHS clients is, as with other telecommunication devices, on a sliding scale based on income. Access to assistive technology for those who require it is far more than a convenience; it can be an essential to independence and employment opportunities for our clients.

Funding of the project stems from a telephone tax placed on telephone land-lines. The price per device has not been finalized. It is estimated that most low-income DeafBlind clients will not have to pay anything out of pocket to obtain a DBC and all will get training to use the technology.

A voice heard and a promise kept

The delivery of the new telecommunication device when it is released in the spring will fulfill a promise kept by the DSHS Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) to their DeafBlind clients.

For people who are DeafBlind, a device that allows for outreach with the entire community adds to a better quality of life. For the sighted-hearing population, it offers the opportunity to interact with a vital group of people who have been isolated from the greater world far too long. With the aid of fresh technology and communities that embrace diversity, the DeafBlind will be a tool that will give them a voice in the mainstream.

A device that allows for outreach with the entire community adds to a better quality of life.

Housing program seeks qualified applicants



abused Deaf women's advocacy services

"A Place of Our Own" transitional housing program at the Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS) will be having some vacancies coming up for women with children who are homeless or in transition. This brand-new apartment building is located in a lovely residential neighborhood north of the University of Washington in Seattle.

This building features fully furnished apartments for very low income families. All units are subsidized by project-based Section 8 through the Seattle Housing Authority. Qualified applicants will meet an income limit and must have one or more children. Each family can stay here up to two full years.

"A Place of Our Own" is a unique building with built-in accommodations



for Deaf and Deaf-Blind residents plus a full range of on-site services: advocacy, parenting classes, child care, counseling and much more. Most of the ADWAS staff are Deaf and all are fluent in ASL.

Applying is easy! If you or someone you know wishes to apply to this program, please contact kay@adwas.org for an application packet. We will work with each family to arrange transportation to Seattle.

For more information on ADWAS, please visit our website at www.adwas.org

News for Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened People: ODHH Assistive Listening System Equipment Loans

By Colleen Rozmaryn, Program Manager
Assistive Communication Technology (ACT)

ODHH has been receiving requests more frequently from other DSHS offices to use our Assistive Listening System (ALS) equipment! Historically, ODHH provided ALS equipment to a few agencies. But many DSHS agencies did not know ODHH offered this service. That has since changed! We are pleased to know that more DSHS offices are aware that communication access is needed for their clients who have hearing loss and they can quickly find help from ODHH.

Now for the exciting part! During the first few months of 2008 the ACT Program purchased additional ALS equipment to increase availability of ALS throughout the state. The Regional Service Centers (RSCs) now have ALS equipment to make it possible for DSHS programs, services and activities to be communication accessible to their customers with hearing loss. Our goal is to provide enough state-owned ALS for RSCs to loan for the benefit of their community members as needed.

ODHH and RSCs always provide training to at least one person who is borrowing state-owned ALS equipment. The borrower needs:

- to learn the parts of the ALS
- to learn about the different uses for listening accessories
- how to hook the system together
- how to repack them

Borrowers are required to sign a statement that promises their division/office will be responsible for the cost or replacement of any ALS equipment that is broken or lost while they are using it. As long as ALS equipment is well cared for it will remain available to loan to DSHS offices for many years to come. Two examples of situations in which DSHS used ALS equipment to provide access are:

- DSHS/Mental Health Division community meetings
- State employee retirement seminars

To inquire about the availability of Assistive Listening Devices for access to DSHS programs and presentations, feel free to contact Colleen Rozmaryn by phone or TTY at 1-800-422-7930 or by e-mail at rozmaic@dshs.wa.gov.

We are pleased to know that more DSHS offices are aware that communication access is needed for their clients who have hearing loss.

Photoshoot

By Claudia Foy

On August 21, 2007, the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) had a photo shoot at Seattle's Hearing, Speech, and Deafness Center (HSDC) to expand its stock of visual media. Stefanie Felix, a Seattle-based photographer with over 20 years of experience who has been recognized for her photos of Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) clients in the DSHS "Heart Gallery," was selected to show important ODHH services through her photographs.

Of the 76 hearing, hard of hearing, deaf, deaf blind, and speech disabled individuals who applied to model for the photo shoot, seventeen (17) were selected. With assistance from ODHH staff and models, Stefanie and her assistant, Erika Enquist, snapped over 500 pictures for ODHH to use. Stefanie's focus on ODHH's relationship with the community was a challenge for her. She explained, "Because I suddenly became immersed in the deaf and hard of hearing community I had to learn a lot of new things, including new ways to communicate, which surely impacted the photographs I made."

The gallery of images features unique photos of those who live with hearing loss, showing them in some of the following events:

- Communicating in American Sign Language (ASL).
- Connecting with others through specialized telecommunication devices and Washington Relay.
- Visiting health care professionals, such as an audiologist.
- Using Assistive Listening Systems (ALS) to communicate with other people in everyday life.

Since ODHH also provides services to individuals with speech disabilities, we wanted their community represented in our gallery as well. Kelly Robison, the ODHH Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED) Program Manager, was at the photo shoot along with persons with speech disabilities. Celena, one of the young girls invited to the event, is unable to speak for herself and relies on specialized devices to communicate. Kelly lit up sharing her experience: "Seeing Celena interact with her mom, with the photographer, and with other models was an amazing experience. It was exciting to see her fun personality show with her use of the equipment that helps her to communicate with others."

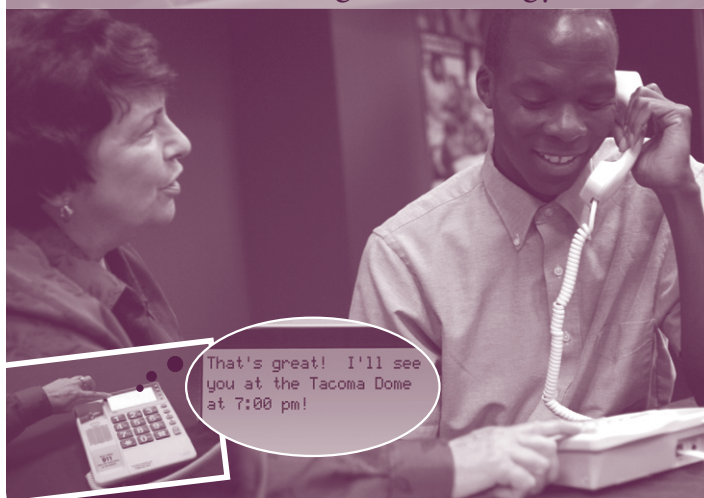
Some community members may have already seen a few of the images selected for our media "library". Several photographs were used to create three new-and-improved display panels for ODHH outreach events, which were shown for the first time at the DeafNation Expo in September. Ryan Bondroff, the ODHH Information, Referral, and Advocacy (IRA) Program Manager, was at the event. He reported, "People commented that the display panels are really attractive and professional." We encourage the public to visit the ODHH booth at local events for more information on programs and services provided and to see the new face of ODHH.

Special thanks are given out:

- I don't know how to give enough thanks to those who applied for modeling positions, but didn't get the chance to participate. ODHH may have opportunities in the future for involvement.



Providing access
through technology



Connecting families,
friends and businesses



Photographs © Stephanie Felix

- To Susie Burdick, CEO of HSDC, for her generosity in letting ODHH use the facility for this event.
- To Jelica Nuccio, Executive Director of Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC) for her willingness to let ODHH use the DBSC to shoot different devices.

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Removing Communication Barriers

Providing resources to allow equal access for the deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled to businesses, professionals and communities.



The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

All images © 2007 Stephanie Felix



Photographs © Stephanie Felix

- To the models: Andy, Ronise, Tim, Robbi, Gerardo, Tamara, Olivia, Ocean, Leonard, Amanda, Kent, Frank, Dean, Christine, Angela, Robert, Mimi, Celena, and Belitha for not being "camera shy."
- To Stefanie Felix and her assistant, Erika Enquist for working with DSHS and our community.

Serving communities statewide



Working together toward solutions



Meeting communication needs

Photographs © Stephanie Felix

- To ODHH Staff: Kelly Robison, Colleen Rozmaryn, Steve Peck, Emily Hill, Ryan Bondroff, Jennifer Chowning, and Ausha Potts for their teamwork in making this great accomplishment.

To see the DSHS Heart Gallery, go to:

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/heartgallery/virtual/07Fvhg6.html>

Get Connected!

With Washington Relay

Get—and stay—connected to family, friends and co-workers. It has never been easier with Washington Relay.

Washington Relay is a free service provided by Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) to ensure equal communication access to the telephone service for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and speech disabled.

To use Washington Relay, simply dial 711 to connect with an operator. The operator will dial the requested number and relay the conversation between the two callers.

You'll never feel disconnected again!



VOICE	1.800.833.6384
TTY	1.800.833.6388
VCO	1.800.833.6386
STS	1.877.833.6341
HCO	1.800.833.6388
TB	1.800.833.6385

CUSTOMER SERVICE (ENGLISH)
1.800.676.3777

CUSTOMER SERVICE (SPANISH)
1.800.676.4290

www.washingtonrelay.com



Sprint's Hard of Hearing Customers Benefit from New and Free Web-based Solutions

Sprint WebCapTel® Solution Shows Captions over the Internet During Phone Calls; Facilitating Easier Conversations

OVERLAND PARK, Kan.— March 5, 2008 – Sprint (NYSE:S) today released Sprint WebCapTel®, a new free web-based service that allows a person who can speak but has challenges hearing over the phone, to read word-for-word captions of their calls on a web browser. This new service is expected to help an estimated 23 million Americans with hearing loss, who may face challenges hearing over the telephone.

"We are always looking for ways to offer unique and easy user experiences for our customers. This new solution from Sprint will offer the hard-of-hearing community with the ability to enjoy the benefits of a natural phone conversation by accessing real-time web-based captions," says Mike Ligas, director of Sprint Relay.

With Sprint WebCapTel®, users can make and receive calls on their own telephone, cell phone, land-line, or even an amplified phone. During the call, if they have difficulty hearing what is being said, they can log into www.sprintcaptel.com and read written captions of everything their caller speaks. Captions appear virtually at the same time as the person speaks, allowing users to enjoy a natural telephone conversation.

With this new service, CapTel® is available almost anywhere with a phone and internet access on a computer. Using any phone, even amplified phones, Sprint WebCapTel® will capture the audio of the person speaking to the user and change the spoken sounds into words to read. When displayed on a web browser, the user can change the font size, color, and

even background. When a call is completed, the user can save the captioned conversation for later review, allowing the user to concentrate on being involved in the conversation.

"WebCapTel puts people with hearing loss back in control of their own telephone conversations - any time, anywhere - by capitalizing on the convenience and prevalence of the Internet," states Robert Engelke, president of Ultratec, Inc., the company that developed CapTel technology. "It gives people with hearing loss the confidence to rely on the telephone again, level-

"WebCapTel puts people with hearing loss back in control of their own telephone conversations - any time, anywhere - by using the convenience and prevalence of the Internet."



are not available. To learn more about this free service, visit www.sprintcaptel.com.

Sprint has 17 years of experience in providing relay services to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind or have a speech disability to communicate with hearing persons on the phone. Sprint's experience in the field assures users of Sprint Relay receive quality service no matter what type of Relay service they are using. Relay service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the number of calls placed or call length. For more information, visit www.sprintrelay.com. Sprint WebCapTel is

an extension of Sprint's existing CapTel® service, which also provides captions during phone calls, but requires a specialized telephone to display the captions.

CapTel and WebCapTel are registered trademarks of Ultratec, Inc.

Source: http://newsreleases.sprint.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=127149&p=irol-newsArticle_newsroom&ID=1115705&highlight=

***ODHH has learned that there may be a waiting list to register for WebCapTel.**

ing the playing field for professional opportunities, in social situations, and in matters of personal safety."

This free service is available for Sprint customers anywhere in the United States and within US Territories. However, calls to or from international locations, such as Canada or Mexico,

The DSHS Minority Advisory Committee and the Disability Advisory Committee are recruiting new members:



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
P.O. Box 45839, Olympia, Washington 98504-5839

March 27, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Minority Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) are currently recruiting new members. The Advisory Committees are comprised of fifteen individuals who are appointed by the DSHS Secretary.

The deadline for applications is October 31, 2008. The application is located at the Diversity Affairs home page: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dao/>. Feel free to share the electronic application and/or to copy and share the enclosed application.

- Provide DSHS the disability community's vision of how to establish and implement services that are responsive to the needs of people with disabilities in Washington State.
- Advise the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) on ways to develop programs, services and a workforce that are responsive to the needs of ethnic minorities in Washington State.

Members are asked to serve a three-year term, attend quarterly meetings and as needed, contribute to committees, taskforces or workgroups to fulfill this mission.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions or need this material in an alternative format please contact Esmeralda Crosson at (360) 725-5831.

Sincerely,

Frances Carr, Director
DSHS Division of Diversity Affairs

Washington State's Newest Relay Account Manager: Van K. Scheppach

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is thrilled to have Van K. Scheppach as our newest relay account manager in Washington State. He began working for Washington State Sprint Relay on December 2007.

Van K. Scheppach has worked for Sprint in the Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) industry for 14 years now. He graduated from Gallaudet University in 1967 with a B.A. degree in History. In 1974 he graduated with a M.A. degree in Rehabilitation and Counseling from the University of Tennessee.

Before working for Sprint, Van was a high school Social Studies teacher for 19 years at Schools for the Deaf in Idaho, Colorado and Arkansas. Then he worked at the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) as the Relay Contract Administrator for three years before joining the Sprint Relay team in 1994.

As the Relay Account Manager, he is responsible for Washington Relay outreach activities and all other activities related to the Washington Relay contract with ODHH.

He looks forward to meeting many Washington Relay consumers and hopes to educate the public about how Washington Relay benefits deaf, hard-of-hearing, hearing, deaf-blind and speech-disabled people.

You can contact Van K Scheppach at:

1100 E. Olive Way, Suite 1200
Seattle, WA 98101
TTY: 888-655-3514
Fax: 206-254-5137
E-mail: van.scheppach@sprint.com

Do you need ODHH publications in other reading formats or in a foreign language?

Information, Referral and Advocacy Updates
By Ryan Bondroff

ODHH can provide ODHH-related program information in Large Print, Braille format or in a foreign language.

Large Print and Braille Format:

We have new large print brochures about ODHH's programs and the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program. For people who request Braille materials, we can provide those brochures and other ODHH related materials as well.

Foreign Language Format:

If you prefer to read ODHH materials in a foreign language such as Spanish, Russian, Chinese, French, etc. We can have ODHH materials translated in any language that meet your language needs.

Please contact Ryan Bondroff to request materials in your preferred foreign language or reading format (large print or Braille) via email at: bondroffryan@dshs.wa.gov or call 1-(800) 422-7930. You can also use Videophone (VP) to contact ODHH. We will complete your request and mail the materials to you.

Back Issues of ODHH Community Review

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has back issues available for anyone who is interested in receiving them. Please contact ODHH at (800) 422-7930 V/TTY or email ODHH@dshs.wa.gov to let us know which newsletter and how many copies you need. We'll be happy to send you those newsletters.

List of Back Issues:

1. Spring 2004, Volume 1, Number 1
2. Fall 2004, Volume 1, Number 2
3. Winter 2005, Volume 2, Number 1
4. Summer 2005, Volume 2, Number 2
5. Fall 2005, Volume 2, Number 3

Regular and Large Print available:

6. Winter 2006, Volume 3, Number 1
7. Summer 2006, Volume 3, Number 2
8. Fall 2006, Volume 3, Number 3
9. Winter 2007, Volume 4, Number 1
10. Spring 2007, Volume 4, Number 2
11. Summer 2007, Volume 4, Number 3
12. Fall 2007, Volume 4, Number 4
13. Winter 2008, Volume 5, Number 1



Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

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(360) 902-8000 V/TTY**

Web site: <http://odhh.dshs.wa.gov>

Contact ODHH by Video Phone (VP) at:

VP IP Address: 209.181.93.249

VP#: (360) 902-8000

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Claudia Foy, SHS Program Manager foyclam@dshs.wa.gov

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